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New Phase Opens in EU-US Climate Change Relations

WASHINGTON, DC, April 21, 2005 (ENS) - Two days of meetings between European leaders and key Bush administration officials have provided a new opening for EU-US co-operation on climate change. The two sides met in Washington on Monday and Tuesday.

The European side was represented by Lucien Lux, Minister of the Environment of Luxemburg, which holds the EU Presidency until June 30; Lord Whitty, representing the future British presidency which begins July 1; and European Environment Commissioner Stavros Dimas.

They held extensive talks with Paula Dobriansky, under secretary of state for global affairs and chief U.S. negotiator on climate change, and a number of key U.S. policy makers including James Connaughton, who chairs the White House Council on Environment Quality.

Both sides agreed that climate change presents a major challenge for policy makers now and in the future.

“We moved beyond discussing technological innovation. We explored ways of future co-operation which include issues such as energy efficiency, renewables, the use of market-based instruments and adaptation measures,” said Commissioner Dimas in Washington.

The Bush administration declined to ratify the Kyoto Protocol which limits the emission of climate warming greenhouse gases, but the European Union and all member states have ratified the

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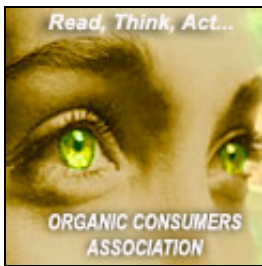
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protocol and are taking steps to curb emissions. But the protocol covers only the period from 2008 through 2012, and is generally considered to be a first step towards controlling global warming.

The talks this week took a longer range view and officials looked beyond the year 2012. "The results of these talks could well mark the beginning of a new phase of US-EU co-operation on climate change. We are ready to seriously discuss with our American partners the future of an international climate change regime after 2012," said Dimas.

Concretely, agreement was reached to re-launch the EU-US high level group bringing together representatives from both sides of the Atlantic to discuss policies combating climate change, and a broader environmental agenda.

Dimas left Washington on Tuesday for New York where he is attending the 13th session of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development at UN Headquarters.

President George W. Bush will host European Council President Jean-Claude Juncker and European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso at the White House June 20 for the annual U.S.-European Union Summit.

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Kerr-McGee Agrees to \$74 Million Radioactive Cleanup

WASHINGTON, DC, April 21, 2005 (ENS) - Three federal agencies and the state of Illinois have reached a \$74 million settlement with Kerr-McGee Chemical that is expected to result in the cleanup of radioactive wastes and the restoration of natural resources at two Superfund sites in and around the city of West Chicago, Illinois.

The U.S. Department of Justice, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) said Wednesday that the settlement provides for cleanup of the last radioactive contamination remaining from 40 years of disposal from the Rare Earths Facility, which was operated by Kerr-McGee and its predecessors.

A consent decree, filed in U.S. District Court in Chicago, will require Kerr-McGee to excavate 77,000 cubic yards of radioactive contamination in the West Branch DuPage River and Kress Creek and ship the contaminated soils to a facility licensed to handle such wastes. Kerr-McGee will also be required to repair any damage caused to vegetation, banks, and waterways as a result of its cleanup activities.

environmental groups in taking action on urgent issues.
www.saveourevironment.org

Global warming

From manufacturing to motoring The scientific perspective
www.scenta.co.uk/globalw

News on Kyoto Protocol

Updated daily by energy & environment consulting team.
indeco.com/kyoto

Quote of Note

"We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect."
-- Aldo Leopold,
American environmentalist and author

"Today marks a major victory for the citizens and environment of the Chicago area," said Acting Assistant Attorney General Kelly Johnson, of the Justice Department's Environment and Natural Resources Division. "The last radioactive contamination from operations that ceased long ago will be cleaned up and the natural resources in the area will be restored."

The cleanup of the West Branch DuPage River and Kress Creek will extend for eight miles from the City of West Chicago down to the McDowell Dam south of Warrenville. It is expected to take four years to complete.

The sediments and soils of the banks and waterways were contaminated with thorium residues from the 1930s through the early 1970s as a result of the production of thorium materials at the Rare Earths Facility for use in defense and other applications.

"We traveled a long road to reach this agreement, but we ended up in the right place: restoration of the West Branch of the DuPage River and Kress Creek," said Thomas Skinner, EPA acting assistant administrator for the Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance. "Everyone in the area will benefit from this settlement."

In addition to the cleanup and restoration work, Kerr-McGee will pay \$6 million into the Superfund for past costs that the EPA covered; reimburse up to \$1.675 million in future EPA oversight costs; pay the state of Illinois \$100,000 and the DOI \$75,000 for costs relating to overseeing natural resources work; and perform activities or spend money to enhance natural resources in the waterways and the DuPage County Forest Preserve at a cost of up to \$800,000.

"This agreement is truly the result of federal, state and local governments and entities working together to ensure that these sites that once were contaminated are going to become safe as neighborhoods and a park." Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan said. "On behalf of the state, I will work to ensure that the damaged areas are restored."

"The benefits of this settlement to natural resources are twofold," said Robyn Thorson, regional director for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. "In addition to removing radioactive contamination, this plan will restore streambanks, aquatic habitats, and other natural areas affected by clean-up activities. The Service believes it is essential that the communities' fish and wildlife resources are addressed in the settlement."

The West Branch DuPage River and Kress Creek are the last areas of radioactive contamination in the vicinity of the Rare Earths Facility remaining to be cleaned up.

Under prior EPA orders, Kerr-McGee spent approximately \$115 million cleaning radioactive contamination in residential areas, West Chicago's Reed-Keppler Park, and West Chicago's Sewage Treatment Plant from approximately 1995 to 2004.

Under a license from the Illinois Emergency Management Agency, Department of Nuclear Safety, Kerr-McGee is decommissioning the Rare Earths Facility.

The proposed consent decree is subject to a 30 day public comment period.

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Smog Strips \$520 Million a Year From California Wallets

SACRAMENTO, California, April 21, 2005 (ENS) - Smoggy air costs Californians more than \$520 million a year - the total for hundreds of trips to the emergency room, thousands of hospital admissions and millions of missed school days, according to an Environmental Working Group (EWG) analysis of state data.

Smog is also responsible for the deaths of hundreds of Californians of all ages each year and other permanent impacts to children's health. But many of those lives, and much of the cost, would be saved by reducing statewide smog levels to the tougher standards under consideration by the California Air Resources Board (ARB).

Smog is a health risk to all Californians, but the burden is disproportionately borne by asthma patients and children.

Air Resources Board scientists estimate that meeting the proposed tougher smog standards would, each year, avert 300 emergency room visits for asthma attacks, 4,000 hospital admissions for treatment of asthma and other respiratory diseases, and 3.3 million school absences.

In Los Angeles County, schools would see more than one million fewer absences a year. Since state support of local schools is based on attendance, the cost of smog-related absences to California school districts totals \$82 million a year - and the cost to parents of the affected children is three times that.

High levels of ozone, or smog, like those found in the Los Angeles air basin and throughout the Central Valley, irritate lung passages, causing coughing, wheezing, chest tightness and shortness of breath. People with pre-existing lung disease are at greatest risk.

African-Americans suffer the highest rates of asthma. People of color also have more severe asthma symptoms, with double or

more the rate of asthma-related hospitalization and death. Poorer families have higher rates of asthma and less access to medical care, meaning that they are unduly impacted by air pollution, the EWG analysis has found.

When smog levels peak, the state advises schools to keep children from playing outdoors. EWG obtained data for the Air Resources Board ozone monitors closest to almost 12,000 public and private schools and found that from 2000 to 2003, approximately 2,800 California schools serving 1.7 million students experienced ozone levels high enough to trigger an outdoor activity warning on at least one occasion.

The worst schools, attended by more than 300,000 students, had on average five or more outdoor activity warnings each year. Achieving the proposed health-based ozone standards will alleviate the need to restrict outdoor activity and will protect California children's right to a healthy life.

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Fishing Halted on Columbia River

OLYMPIA, Washington, April 21, 2005 (ENS) - The agency that regulates the Columbia River has put a stop to sport and commercial fishing for three kinds of fish after scientists expressed concern over a collapse in the salmon populations.

Effective today, all salmon, steelhead and shad angling will be prohibited on the Mainstem Columbia River from the mouth upstream to McNary Dam, including concurrent jurisdiction waters in Select Areas, until further notice, the Columbia River Compact ruled on Tuesday. Officials also suspended commercial fishing on selected stocks of hatchery fish.

The Columbia River Compact has congressional and statutory authority to adopt seasons and rules for Columbia River commercial fisheries.

In recent years, the Compact has consisted of the Oregon and Washington agency directors, or their delegates, acting on behalf of the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission and the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission. In addition, the Columbia River treaty tribes have authority to regulate treaty Indian fisheries.

Fisheries scientists had forecast spring Chinook run returns of 254,100 salmon,

Scientists had predicted that more than 200,000 chinook salmon would return to the Bonneville Dam east of Portland. But as of Monday, only 1,544 chinooks had appeared.

The Columbia River and its tributaries in Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Montana have historically been the world's largest producer of chinook, the biggest of the Pacific salmon species.

The federal and state agencies have spent billions of dollars to restore the salmon runs after overfishing, logging, and development brought their numbers to an all time low. Scientists are at a loss to explain why the restoration is not successful.

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Environmental Sensors Fly on Unmanned Aerial Vehicle

PALMDALE, California, April 21, 2005 (ENS) - With a scientific payload developed by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), a remotely operated aircraft mission demonstration took off Wednesday in Palmdale.

The flight marks the first time NOAA has funded an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) mission aimed at filling research and operational data gaps in critical areas, such as weather and water, climate and ecosystem monitoring and management.

In collaboration with NASA and General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, the demonstration of the Altair Unmanned Aerial Vehicle took place at General Atomics' Gray Butte Flight Operation Facility.

"UAVs have the potential to allow us to see weather before it happens, detect toxins before we breathe them, and discover harmful and costly algal blooms before the fish do - and there is an urgency to more effectively address these issues," said Dr. Conrad Lautenbacher, under secretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere and NOAA administrator.

"While most Americans associate UAVs with national security, NOAA is working with partners to determine their role in the nation's environmental security as well," Lautenbacher said.

NASA partnered with General Atomics Aeronautical Systems to build the Altair, which can carry an internal 660 pound payload of sensors and other scientific equipment to 52,000 feet for over 30 hours.

Sensors in the UAV's payload will yield:

- Ocean Color Sensor images will improve fisheries management through better assessment of eco-system health, including improved forecasting and warnings of harmful algal blooms.

- Ozone Sensor Measurements will help determine ultraviolet vulnerability.
- Gas Chromatograph Measurements will help scientists estimate greenhouse gases potentially associated with climate change and global warming.
- Passive Microwave Vertical Sounder will help determine when flash flood warnings must be issued.
- Digital Camera System will facilitate shoreline mapping, habitat mapping and ecosystem monitoring, including spill and aquatic disease tracking and assessing land-based discharges and marine mammal distribution and abundance.
- Electro Optical/Infrared Sensor will provide non-intrusive, maritime surveillance for fishery and marine sanctuary enforcement. Current aerial surveillance has a short survey range and is noisy, dangerous, infrequent and not cost-effective.

With an 86 foot wingspan, the UAV's endurance, reliability and payload capacity provide the capability to improve mapping, charting and other vital environmental forecasting in remote areas, such as the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands and Alaska.

In California, the aircraft's capabilities will help mitigate natural disasters, such as flash floods and fatal mudslides.

UAVs have been called the best choice for dirty, dull and dangerous missions: dirty because they can be sent to contaminated areas; dull because they allow for long transit times opening new dimensions of persistent surveillance and tracking; and dangerous because they can go into hazardous areas with no threat to human life.

Real-time imagery is fed to the UAV's ground command center from which the aircraft is piloted. A primary goal of the demonstration is to evaluate UAVs for future scientific and operational requirements related to NOAA's oceanic and atmospheric research, climate research, marine sanctuary mapping and enforcement, nautical charting, and fisheries assessment and enforcement.

"NASA is glad to see that UAVs are being used for more and more diverse and important operations," said Terrence Hertz, deputy associate administrator for technology in the NASA Aeronautics Research Mission Directorate. "We're looking forward to more breakthrough research in areas such as regenerative fuel cells, multi-UAV operations through networking, and routine access to the National Airspace System that will allow UAVs to play an expanding role in Earth Science and other types of missions."

UAVs will serve as part of the emerging Global Earth Observation System of Systems, which is now supported by nearly 60 countries.

U.S. Air Force Heads List of Green Power Buyers

WASHINGTON, DC, April 21, 2005 (ENS) - The U.S. Air Force tops the list of green power buyers in the United States, according to a list of the top 25 released this week by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The Air Force has purchased more than 321,000 megawatt hours annually for bases across the country.

Green power is electricity from renewable resources such as solar, wind, or geothermal power. Green power accounts for about two percent of America's electricity supply, but purchasing of renewable energy is accelerating development of these renewable technologies.

The top 25 green power purchasers are buying enough energy to run more than 150,000 homes a year - more than 1.6 million megawatt hours of green power annually, EPA figures show.

Second on the list, Johnson & Johnson, bought more than 241,000 megawatt hours of renewable energy in 2004.

The EPA and the World Bank rank third and fourth on the list.

Fifth is the U.S. General Services Administration, followed by Whole Foods Market in sixth place, the City of San Diego, California in seventh, the New Jersey Consolidated Energy Savings Program in eighth place, WhiteWave Foods, and the Austin, Texas Independent School District round out the top 10.

Companies in the top 25 include Staples, FedEx Kinko's, BMW Manufacturing, and Advanced Micro Devices.

Universities rank too including University of Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania State, and Harvard.

Governments in the top 25 include the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania; Montgomery County, Maryland; the City of Santa Monica, California; and the City of Portland, Oregon.

The U.S. Navy, Region South ranks in the top 25, as does the U.S. Department of Energy's Forrestal and Germantown facilities, and the East Bay Municipal Utility District Main Wastewater Plant.

The ranking is the work of the EPA's Green Power Partnership, a voluntary program working to standardize green power procurement as part of best practice environmental management. Partners in the program pledge to switch to green power for a portion of their electricity needs in return for EPA technical assistance and recognition.

The Green Power Partnership currently includes more than 550 Partners, including Fortune 500 companies, states, federal agencies, trade associations and universities.

The EPA updates the list of green power purchasers quarterly. For more on green power, visit: <http://www.epa.gov/greenpower>. For more on EPA's top 25 list, visit: <http://www.epa.gov/greenpower/partners/top25.htm>.

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iPods Dance for Shareholders at Apple Headquarters

CUPERTINO, California, April 21, 2005 (ENS) - Activists dressed as large iPods danced the iPod Shuffle - into the trash - to the music of U-2 outside the Apple® shareholders meeting today at the company's Cupertino headquarters.

The Computer TakeBack campaign held the press conference and street theatre event to release their version of Apple's annual report as a warning to Apple shareholders of the potential impacts of Apple's e-waste policies.

The alternative version, "UnApple: From iPod to iWaste," points out that Apple's iPod is disposable and contributes to the growing pile of electronic waste in the United States.

"Apple management doesn't recognize that their failure to seriously address the problem of e-waste is already starting to affect the company's image," said Sheila Davis, Executive Director of the Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition. "Their most popular product, the iPod, is basically a disposable product; once the battery wears out, you have to send your iPod back to Apple to pay for a replacement, which means many people will just toss them out. This is not environmentally sound design."

Apple this week announced financial results for its fiscal 2005 second quarter ended March 26, 2005. For the quarter, the company posted a net profit of \$290 million, up from \$46 million in the year-ago quarter.

"We are delighted to report a record second quarter for Apple in both revenue and earnings," said Steve Jobs, Apple's CEO. "Apple is firing on all cylinders and we have some incredible new products in the pipeline for the coming year, starting with Mac OS X Tiger later this month."

Apple shipped 1,070,000 Macintosh® units and 5,311,000 iPods during the quarter, representing a 43 percent increase in CPU units and a 558 percent increase in iPods over the year-ago quarter, the company reported.

The Computer TakeBack activists say the problem of electronic waste begins at the point of shipping new electronic products.

“Millions of old computers and iPods are trashed every year. They end up in landfills, so lead and mercury end up in our water and soil, said Anita Jackson, from the Center for Environmental Health. “We can only reduce the serious health impacts from this e-waste if Apple joins other electronics manufacturers in a comprehensive computer takeback program.”

“This growing crisis of e-waste is one that the producers are beginning to realize they have to deal with, one way or another, said Ted Smith, Chair of the Computer TakeBack Campaign. “Apple’s competitors, Dell and HP, have already pledged to work with the Computer Takeback Campaign to create serious takeback programs in the U.S. We want Apple to do the same thing.

The Computer TakeBack Campaign advocates a system whereby electronics producers take responsibility for their obsolete products, and manage programs to reuse components then recycle any remaining materials. By diverting electronics into strictly controlled recycling programs, toxic substances in computers, like lead, mercury, and cadmium, are kept out of municipal landfills or incinerators.

“The health of the community should be a primary concern for any business,” said Father William Leininger, of the Interfaith Council for Race, Religion, Economic and Social Justice. “We’d like Apple to cooperate with other producers and take full responsibility for recycling the toxic materials in their products.”

The Computer TakeBack campaign is a national coalition of environmental groups seeking to protect the health and well-being of electronics users, workers, and the communities where electronics are produced and discarded by requiring consumer electronics manufacturers and brand owners to take full responsibility for the life-cycle of their products. In January, the Computer TakeBack Campaign kicked off a national corporate campaign directed at Apple at the Mac World Expo in San Francisco.

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